



**MEMORANDUM**  
**2021-014**

DATE: March 24, 2021

TO: All Soil and Water Conservation Districts

FROM: Kurt Boeckmann, Director *KDB*

SUBJECT: Existing Fence Definition and Updated DSP 3.3 Grazing System Fence Policy

The soil and water districts commission reviewed the DSP 3.3 Grazing System Fence practice policy during their February 10, 2021 meeting. The commission clarified policy for the DSP 3.3 Grazing System Fence practice and established a definition of existing fence in the general cost-share policies that is applicable to all practices with a fence component.

In the DSP 3.3 Grazing System Fence practice, the commission changed the applicability statement to the following to further define the use of the practice.

Applies to pastureland where permanent vegetative cover is established and forage management can be enhanced through the use of a new planned grazing system or intensification of an existing system. The practice is not intended to be used to replace or maintain existing fence. Applies to pastureland where permanent vegetative cover is established and can be enhanced through the use of a planned grazing system. The system operator must follow an approved grazing system plan. The system operator must attend an approved grazing school provided by University of Missouri, in conjunction with NRCS, prior to the district's submittal of a contract for review.

In addition, the commission added a statement to section 5. Cost-share is not authorized for:

- g. Replacement of existing fence which is being used as a component of a current forage management plan.

The commission adopted the following definition of an existing fence applicable to all practices with a fence component to ensure the evaluation of existing fence is being conducted the same way throughout the state. The definition is part of the general policy in the practice section of the cost-share handbook.

Existing fence is defined as having at least 50% of the materials present and usable compared to the original construction of the fence. An existing fence is one that is

functioning and achieving the purpose of the practice addressing the resource concern. If an existing fence is cleared by the current landowner prior to an evaluation of the fence by planning staff, cost-share assistance is not available to replace the fence for three years. The latest aerial maps can be used to help determine when the fence was cleared or the landowner providing documentation of when the fence was cleared.

The policies are effective as of the commission's approval, February 10, 2021. Updates to the cost-share handbook will be forthcoming. Until that time, there are draft pages of the handbook with the adopted policies attached for reference.

If you have any questions, please contact your district coordinator.

Attachments

**Existing Fence**

Existing fence is defined as having at least 50% of the materials present and usable compared to the original construction of the fence. An existing fence is one that is functioning and achieving the purpose of the practice addressing the resource concern. If an existing fence is cleared by the current landowner prior to an evaluation of the fence by planning staff, cost-share assistance is not available to replace the fence for three years. The latest aerial maps can be used to help determine when the fence was cleared or the landowner providing documentation of when the fence was cleared.

### ***DSP 3.3    Grazing System Fence***

#### **Purpose**

1. Improve or maintain desired species composition and vigor of plant community.
2. Improve or maintain surface and/or subsurface water quality and quantity.
3. Improve or maintain riparian and watershed function.
4. Reduce accelerated soil erosion and maintain or improve soil condition.

#### **Applicability**

Applies to pastureland where permanent vegetative cover is established and forage management can be enhanced through the use of a new planned grazing system or intensification of an existing system. The practice is not intended to be used to replace or maintain existing fence. The system operator must follow an approved grazing system plan. The system operator must attend an approved grazing school provided by University of Missouri, in conjunction with NRCS, prior to the district's submittal of a contract for review.

#### **Erosion Requirements**

Practice has no erosion requirements.

#### **Specifications**

The completed practice must meet the NRCS Standards and Specifications for Fence (382) and Prescribed Grazing (528) contained in the Field Office Technical Guide.

#### **Policies**

1. Cooperators must have an approved grazing plan prior to contract board approval.
  - a. A system may be approved for land where livestock do not currently graze; however, the district must verify that the system has livestock within the first year after meeting the Prescribed Grazing (528) standard and specifications.
  - b. After a grazing plan is developed, grazing practices may be installed independently of one another to work towards its implementation.
    - 1) Cost-share payments will be authorized as each practice is completed, according to NRCS standards and specifications within the grazing plan.
  - c. The entire grazing system must meet the standard and specifications for Prescribed Grazing (528) within three years after payment of the first contract or the entire amount of cost-share received must be repaid. The district should give funding priority to cooperators working toward the Prescribed Grazing (528) standard and specifications.
  - d. The size and number of paddocks will be determined by the grazing system plan, which must be designed for appropriate grazing height and rest periods as listed in the NRCS "Grazing Management Guidelines." The planner and district should encourage the cooperator to develop an effective system that meets the program's and cooperator's objectives, and enables the cooperator to stay in compliance. There is no time limit for adding to existing systems.
2. All losing streams and streams that have a perennial pool or permanent flow that lie within paddocks served by a water source through a DSP 3.2 must be fenced to exclude livestock.

- a. When properly designed and installed, the operator may limit access to the excluded area for “flash” grazing if specific, brief time periods are defined in the grazing plan.
  - b. Streams may be fenced out with the DSP 3.3 in any paddock within the grazing system.
3. The following applies to fencing and providing additional water to paddocks. Enter documentation into MoSWIMS as appropriate.
  - a. Water may be provided where a paddock is subdivided or acreage is added to create a new paddock without a water source.
  - b. Additional livestock watering facilities may not be added to paddocks where a water source exists.
  - c. Livestock watering facilities may not be added to paddocks where a pond was excluded using N472 and no subdivision of the paddock is planned.
  - d. A livestock watering facility may be provided in a paddock where a fenced pond has never been utilized for watering and the cooperators has utilized water in an adjacent field.
  - e. Existing fence utilized as part of a planned or existing grazing system does not need to meet cost-share specification for fencing. When establishing a new system, additional wire(s) can be added to the existing fence to bring it up to standard and specifications for the livestock species the system is being planned.
4. ***Cost-share is authorized for:***
  - a. Deterrent fence to create or intensify a grazing system where livestock graze on both sides of the installed fence in accordance with the grazing plan.
    - 1) Construction of fence on an existing system if paddock numbers are increased or acreage is added.
    - 2) Cost-share on the least cost wire component. If the board of supervisors determines that fence other than high tensile electric is the minimum necessary for system, then cost-share can be provided to install other types of deterrent fence. The board’s justification must be properly documented in MoSWIMS as a General note type.
    - 3) The number of strands of wire allowed must be appropriate for the livestock species in the grazing system. Additional strands may be added at a later date if the species changes or for allowance of co-grazing. Fence must meet Standards and Specifications for deterrent of species as listed in the NRCS *Wire Height and Spacing* table.

#### ***Wire Height & Spacing***

Fence Type	Livestock Type	Purpose	Min Number of Wires	Height of Top Wire	Suggested Wire Spacing
Barbed Wire (12.5 gauge standard; 12.5 gauge, 2 strand, twisted, barbless; or	Cattle	Containment	4	48”	12,12,12,12
		Deterrent	4	48”	12,12,12,12
	Sheep/Goats	Containment	6	48”	6,6,6,8,10,12
		Deterrent	5	36”	6,6,6,8,10

Fence Type	Livestock Type	Purpose	Min Number of Wires	Height of Top Wire	Suggested Wire Spacing
15.5 gauge high tensile)	Horses	Containment	4	48"	12,12,12,12
		Deterrent	4	48"	12,12,12,12
Woven wire (Conventional -- top & bottom strands 12.5 gauge with 14.5 wire for intermediate strands with verticals every 4 – 12") (High tensile - all 12.5 gauge high tensile wire with verticals every 6 – 24")	Cattle	Containment	39" woven + 1 barb or HTE	48"	4 (woven), 5
			32" woven + 2 barbs or HTE	48"	4 (woven), 6, 6
	Sheep/Goats	Containment	39" woven + 1 barb or HTE	48"	2 (woven), 7
			36" woven + 2 barbs or HTE	48"	2 (woven), 2, 8
			32" woven + 2 barbs or HTE	48"	2 (woven), 6, 8
		Deterrent	36" woven	36"	0-2"
			32" woven + 1 barb or HTE	36"	0-2"(woven), 4
	Horses	Containment	39" woven + 1 barb or HTE	48"	4 (woven), 5
		Deterrent	32" woven + 1 barb or HTE	42"	4 (woven), 6
Permanent Electric (12.5 gauge high tensile, 12.5 gauge vinyl coated, or 16 gauge multi-	Cattle	Containment	2	36-48"	18-24", 18-24"
		Deterrent	1	26-36"	26-36"
	Sheep/Goats	Containment	5	38-40"	6-8,6-8,8,8,8,8-10
		Deterrent	3	30-32"	8-10, 10, 10-12

Fence Type	Livestock Type	Purpose	Min Number of Wires	Height of Top Wire	Suggested Wire Spacing
strand braided cable)	Horses	Containment	3	48"	24,12,12
		Deterrent	2	40-44"	24,16-18

- b. One-time payment of \$75 for attending an approved grazing school, when the landowner receives payment on any grazing system contract. The incentive payment will be included in the total cost-share dollars received and included in the practice per acre maximums.

5. ***Cost-share is not authorized for:***

- Property line/perimeter fence.
- Fence that cannot be grazed on both sides. The only exception is fence along a stream within a paddock.
- Fence to create paddocks within dense woodlands.
- Fence along roads/lanes utilized to access a residence.
- Fence along crop fields where the primary grain crop is mechanically harvested.
- Fence to exclude a pond. Utilize the N472 Use Exclusion practice to exclude an existing pond.
- Replacement of existing fence which is being used as a component of a current forage management plan.

**Maximum State Cost-Share**

- Assistance is limited to 75% of the established county cost, not to exceed 75% of the state average cost or as directed by the Commission.
- Maximum of \$70 per acre. The acres to be considered for the maximum will be the acreage of paddocks where new fence is installed.
- Utilize the Practice Limits Detail report in MoSWIMS to ensure compliance with applicable maximums.

**Map Requirements**

- Shapefiles from NRCS's Toolkit program must be saved on the district's T:\ drive prior to contract approval. The shapefiles must contain attributes that show the following information that pertains to the contract:
  - Farm Perimeter
  - Acreage Completed under DSP 3.4 and/or DSP 3.5
  - Location of Power Source
  - System Acreage
  - Field Numbers
  - Any other feature that may affect the completed system.
    - Planned items must be shown and labeled with the fiscal year to be installed.
      - Planned Fence
      - Planned Pipeline

- Planned Water Source
  - Planned Watering Facility (Specify Tank or Hydrant)
  - Planned Lime Application
  - Planned Seeding Application
- b. Existing items must be labeled with the fiscal year installed and funding source (EQIP, SWCP, etc.).
- Existing Fence, including existing perimeter and cross fences
  - Existing Pipeline
  - Existing Water Source
  - Existing Watering Facility (Specify Tank or Hydrant)
2. A legible, aerial photography map that shows the completed practice must be scanned and attached as document type “Map” in MoSWIMS prior to contract payment submission. The map must have the following:
- Landowner name and locational data (section/township/range or coordinates)
  - Farm perimeter fence clearly labeled as existing fence
  - Field numbers, field boundaries, and field acres
  - All as built fence should be clearly labeled
  - All planned and existing fence
  - All other planned and existing features of the grazing system
  - Any other features that may affect the contract payment
  - If multiples of the same practice are shown on the map, clearly identify which practice is associated with the contract payment

### **Technical Responsibilities**

Technical staff has the responsibility for determining the need for the practice, for design of the practice based upon the minimum extent necessary, and to certify that the completed practice meets NRCS standards and specifications within commission policy.

### **Acres Served**

Acreage established in permanent vegetative cover within the paddocks where fence is installed. Heavily forested acreage and cropland are not eligible.

### **Extent Installed**

Acreage established in permanent vegetative cover within the paddocks where fence is installed. Heavily forested acreage and cropland are not eligible.

### **Maintenance Life**

10 years.